

1996

# Romanticism in America: the Great Awakening

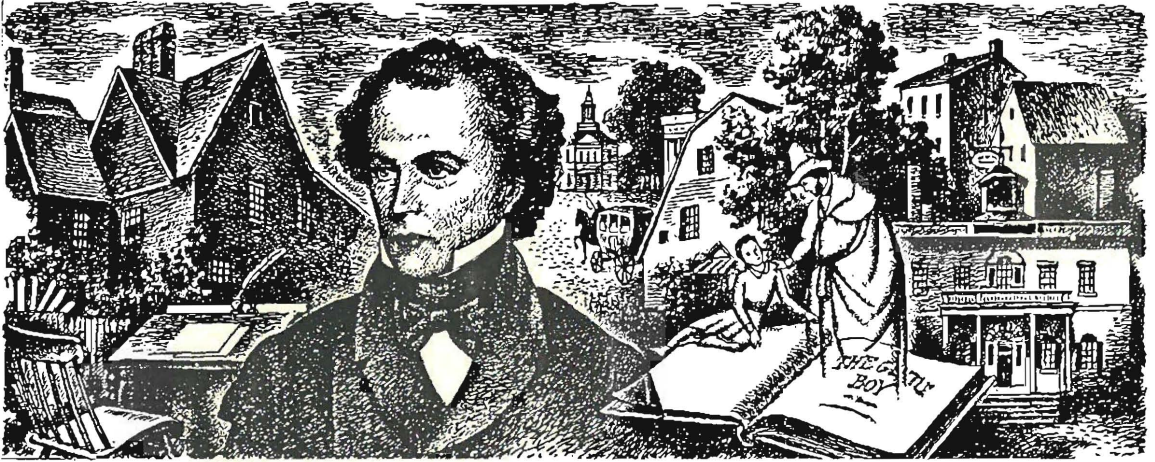
Beam, Kathryn L.

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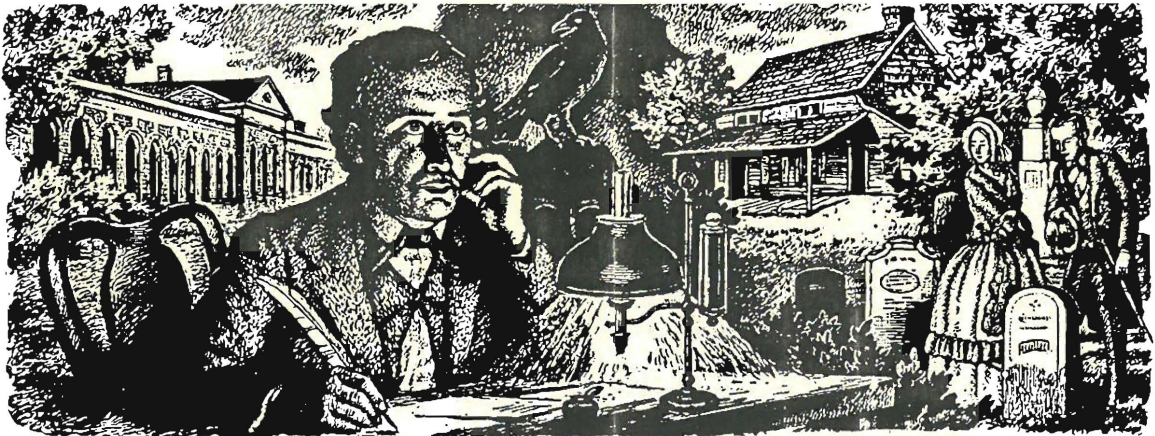
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Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)

# ROMANTICISM IN AMERICA:

## THE GREAT AWAKENING



Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)

**ROMANTICISM IN AMERICA:  
THE GREAT AWAKENING**

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## INTRODUCTION

Who were America's first men of letters? Were they Jonathan Edwards whose sermons were so powerful, Thomas Paine whose rhetoric aroused the emotions of our nation-to-be, Benjamin Franklin whose clear and eloquent prose was so instructive and persuasive, and Philip Freneau whose poems, ballads and satires made him a pioneer in the writing of artistic literature in America? Perhaps they were; or maybe they could have been. Yet, in almost every case, lack of readers, inadequate financial and literary recognition, and even changing personal priorities prohibited these men from finding their full expression as authors. That they never attained the height of genius in the realm of belles-lettres is probably as much an accident of their times as of their talents.

By the early nineteenth century, however, the economic and political growth of the country was so far-reaching that a demand for a national literature began to be heard. Political independence—reaffirmed by the War of 1812—called for independence in cultural and intellectual matters as well. What was needed was a literature based upon American ideals and experience, yet of an artistic quality to equal or surpass English models.

The three writers who met this challenge in the early 1800s were Washington Irving, William Cullen Bryant, and James Fenimore Cooper. By 1825 all three had established themselves as men of letters whose work was important enough to command the attention of cultivated Europeans. Each contributed to the rise of a national literature, selecting subjects and methods of treatment that in the decades ahead inspired Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville in the development of literary forms and techniques. No longer would American writers



James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851)



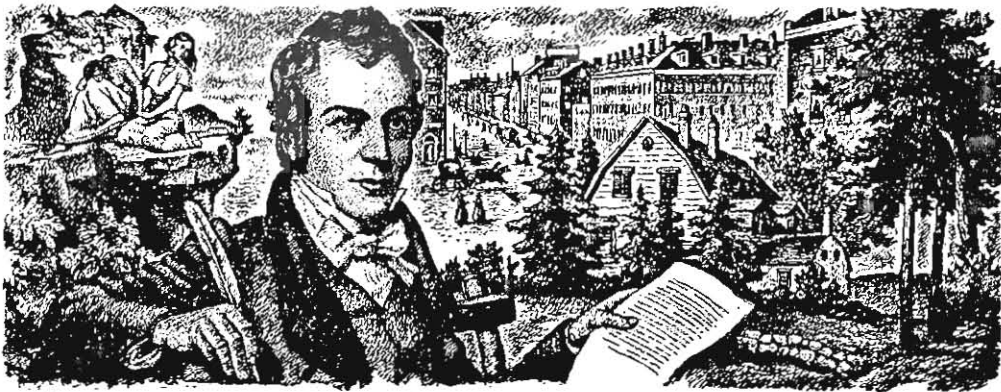
have to turn solely to the Old World for models of excellence.

These writers were for the most part romantics—men like William Wordsworth (1770-1850) or Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) who found inspiration in the beauties of nature and in escape from reality in faraway places, in legends of the past, and in the bizarre or unusual. Their writings often glorified the common man and expressed a belief in the individual.

Such a spirit of romanticism had already played an important part in America's denial of European authority and cultural influence, its pride in the American ideas which had created the Republic, and its delight in the infinite wealth, opportunities, and natural beauties of an unspoiled land. By the 1820s, this same spirit was prompting America's first real literary creators, culminating by the 1850s in what is sometimes called "the romantic triumph" in the development of American literature.

This exhibit presents an overview of the contributions of these early proponents of romanticism in America.

Kathryn L. Beam, Curator



William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878)

## FLOOR CASES 1 & 2

**Richard George Tietze (fl. 1880-1905).** Portrait of Washington Irving, reproduced in *Washington Irving, a Sketch*, by George W. Curtis. New York: The Grolier Club, 1891.

Washington Irving was both the most polished and the most popular American prose writer of his generation. No study of the emergence of American Literature during the first half of the nineteenth century can ignore the contributions of this man who has been called "our first classic." As a stylist and poetic interpreter of legend, Irving gave to the literature of the United States its first promise of eventual maturity. Emerson and Hawthorne may have spoken more clearly, Thoreau may have been thought more strange and Poe more shocking, and Melville and Whitman may have more greatly extended the horizons of readers, but of all these Irving was the more famous and respected. It was Irving who reversed the judgment of the Old World that Americans could not write; he was the first to achieve international fame. George Sanderlin describes Irving as "the 'morning star' of a new literature, the imaginative writings of the American Republic."

The portrait of Irving shown here was engraved on wood by R. G. Tietze from the original India-ink sketch drawn by John Wesley Jarvis (1781-1839) around 1809. Jarvis, considered by some to be the foremost portrait painter of his time in New York, enjoyed a national reputation, and associated with many of the leading figures in American society. In addition to Irving, he painted portraits of Henry Clay, Thomas Paine, DeWitt Clinton, James Fenimore Cooper, and others.

**Washington Irving (1783-1859).** *Letters of Jonathan Oldstyle, Gent.* New York: William H. Clayton, 1824.

Washington Irving's talents and promise were recognized during a precocious childhood, although he did not receive much formal schooling. Instead, he prospered from the excitement of his New York City environment during years of rapid expansion, and by contact with the world of artists and writers to which he was introduced by his older brothers. When his brother Peter became editor of the new *Morning Chronicle*, Irving contributed a series of nine sportive essays, from November 15, 1802, to April 23, 1803, over the signature of "Jonathan Oldstyle, Gent." The

writing may be amateurish, but it is a lively satire on theatrical and social New York, and much of what Irving would do best is foreshadowed here.

All but the first of these letters and the first paragraph of the second letter were reprinted in the *Chronicle Express*, a semi-weekly periodical also edited and published by Peter Irving. They were not published again until this pirated edition appeared in 1824 containing the same omissions as in the *Chronicle*.

**Washington Irving (1783-1859).** *Salmagundi; or, The Whim-whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff, Esq. and Others.* New York: Printed & Published by D. Longworth, 1808. 2 vols.

After a tour of Europe (1804-1806), Irving returned to New York enriched with new friends, new manners, and several notebooks filled with anecdotes and descriptions which would serve for many a future story and tale. He quickly became associated with the gay society of the "Nine Worthies," a lively group which included his brothers Peter and William, and fellow author James Kirke Paulding (1778-1860). Their interest in writing led to a series of twenty yellow-backed pamphlets which they published anonymously from January 24, 1807, to January 25, 1808. The sixty-five essays of *Salmagundi* are audacious sketches satirizing New York's social life, books, theatres, politics, and personalities. The identities of the authors soon became known, and Irving's reputation as a writer and a wit was greatly enhanced.

According to bibliographer William R. Langfeld, the appearance of the twenty pamphlets bound together into two volumes, as shown here, was probably due to their increasing popularity. The publishers found that the separate issues were being preserved and bound, and, therefore, brought out their own set with the additions of title pages and indexes.

**Washington Irving (1783-1859).** *A History of New-York, from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty ...* by Diedrich Knickerbocker. Second edition with alterations. New York: Inskeep and Bradford, 1812. 2 vols.

The last of Irving's "youthful follies," as he later called his early works, is this energetic and sprawling burlesque, a mix of rollicking farce and shrewd satire. Literary historian Stanley T. Williams considers it "the first great book of comic literature written by an American." Swedes, Yankees, colonial historians, Dutch

settlers in New Amsterdam, red-breeched Jefferson and his Democrats, English, French, and Spanish literature, and even the quizzical author himself are all targets of Irving's pen. Many people of Dutch descent resented the attack, but most of New York loved it. Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) said that it made his sides "absolutely sore with laughter." It was soon translated into a half-dozen languages and over the years has rivaled *The Sketch Book* in popularity. Its success was so great, in fact, that in its first year Irving earned the princely sum of \$2,000 in royalties.

The first edition appeared in 1809 and by 1812 another edition was in demand. The text frequently varies between the two editions, and in 1812 Irving added considerable material to the "Account of the Author."

**Washington Irving (1783-1859).** *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* New York: Printed by C. S. Van Winkle, 1819-1820.

"Who reads an American book?" asked scornful British critic Sydney Smith in 1820. The answer was that very few people did. They may have read America's inspiring political documents, some religious tracts and sermons, maybe even Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, but certainly not "polite literature"—poetry, drama, short stories, and essays!

"One American changed all that," says critic George Sanderlin. In the very year that the question was asked, Washington Irving published his *Sketch Book*. In it, Rip Van Winkle and Ichabod Crane made their unforgettable appearances. In a gracious and finished style, Irving offered descriptions of English scenes such as Stratford-on-Avon, Westminster Abbey, and the Boar's Head Tavern. Lord Byron (1788-1824) said that "Crayon [Irving's pseudonym] ... is very good," and Poet Laureate Robert Southey (1774-1843) thought Irving "a remarkably agreeable writer."

*The Sketch Book* was published first in New York in groups of four or five essays during the years 1819 and 1820. Irving had been in England for five years before sending the first parcel of manuscripts to his brother Ebenezer. The surprising commercial success spread so rapidly that within three months a British journal reprinted one of the sketches without permission. To protect his copyright Irving quickly arranged with publishers John Miller and then John Murray II to bring out a complete English edition which appeared in London in 1820.

The edition shown here is the original seven groups of essays published in New York by C. S. Van Winkle, bound together at a later time.

**William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878).** *A Discourse on the Life, Character and Genius of Washington Irving....* New York: G. P. Putnam, 1860.

A few months after Irving's death, William Cullen Bryant was invited to give an oration on Irving to be delivered before the New York Historical Society, at the Academy of Music in New York, on April 3, 1860. Bryant's eulogy includes extensive biographical detail as well as his assessment of Irving's writings. In the passage shown here, Bryant recognizes *The Sketch Book* as "the new impulse given to our literature in 1819." It is interesting that Irving's contemporary singles out this work which was indeed followed shortly thereafter by Bryant's own *Poems* (1821) (see Case 3) and James Fenimore Cooper's *The Spy* (1821) (see Case 5). This is the trio which later literary historians identify as the writers who gave birth to an American literature of quality and promise in keeping with the stature and scope of the new democracy.

*Irvingiana: a Memorial of Washington Irving.* New York: Charles B. Richardson, 1860.

Had Irving not written anything beyond *The Sketch Book* of 1820, his standing in American literature would still be secure if for no reason other than his wonderful characterizations in "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Artists recognized the great potential in these stories, and many illustrated editions have been published. In 1848, the American illustrator, lithographer, and printer, Felix O. C. Darley (1822-1888), designed and etched a set of illustrations for "Rip Van Winkle" (see Wall Case 1) as well as this sketch of Irving himself, which in a relaxed pose accompanied by his dog is a most fit companion piece to the facsimile of one page of Irving's manuscript. Both were selected as the introductory illustrations in this memorial volume prepared shortly after Irving's death on November 28, 1859. The Darley sketch is etched for this publication by James D. Smillie (1833-1909), an artist who engraved as well a series of Darley's illustrations of Cooper's novels.

**Washington Irving (1783-1859).** *Rip Van Winkle ... with Drawings by Arthur Rackham,* A.R.W.S. London: William Heinemann; New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1905.

Some of the most popular illustrations of Irving's stories are these vivid

drawings by English illustrator and water-colorist, Arthur Rackham (1867-1939). He is known for imaginative, delicately colored, and sometimes angular illustrations, establishing a reputation especially as an illustrator of children's books. Among these are the Grimm brothers' *Fairy Tales* (1900), *Peter Pan* (1906), and *Alice in Wonderland* (1907).

This edition of *Rip Van Winkle* carried his name across the Atlantic. It was so popular that Rackham sold all fifty of the drawings when they were shown at an exhibition held at the Leicester Galleries, London, in 1905.

The drawing shown here illustrates the passage: "They stared at him with such fixed statue-like gaze that his heart turned within him and his knees smote together." It depicts Rip's encounter with the company of odd-looking personages who had been playing at ninepins before Rip's arrival in the wild and lonely glen near "one of the highest points of the Kaatskill Mountains."

**Washington Irving (1783-1859).** *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.* Illustrated by Arthur Rackham. London: George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd. [1928]

Rackham's illustrations for this popular Hudson River tale include nine color drawings and many pen and ink sketches. The illustration shown here depicts the school master Ichabod Crane "...striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day." Irving describes him as "...tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole frame most loosely hung together. His head was small, and flat at top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long snipe nose, so that it looked like a weathercock perched upon his spindle neck, to tell which way the wind blew."

**Washington Irving (1783-1859).** *A History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus.* London: John Murray, 1828. 4 vols.

The decade of the 1820s was one of varied activities for Irving. He published a volume of stories based solely on his experiences in England, *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), as well as a collection of German tales, adventure stories, an abortive novellette, and more American sketches "found among the papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker." These *Tales of a Traveller* (1824) contained "The Devil and Tom Walker," by some considered to be his third-best native tale, but taken as a whole the

collection was weak and the book was savagely reviewed. He traveled around Europe during these years, living for periods in many places. His reputation was blurred, and the years were neither productive nor happy.

Finally in 1826 he accepted an invitation to join the staff of the American Embassy in Madrid, and one of the best periods of his picturesque life began. His primary literary assignment was a translation of Don Martín de Navarrete's recently published collection of documents relating to Columbus. He soon realized that he would be more successful with an original work based on Navarrete's documents, and after much diligence and scholarly research, the four volumes of *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* were issued in the summer of 1828. The book was an immediate success with readers and critics, and for half a century Irving's masterpiece remained the major work on Columbus in English.

The English edition shown here predated the American edition published in New York by G. & C. Carvil. These were followed in quick succession by new editions in 1829 and 1831. One-volume abridgments were published as well, both in England and America, in 1829, 1830, and 1831.

**Washington Irving (1783-1859).** *The Alhambra: a Series of Tales and Sketches of the Moors and Spaniards.* Philadelphia: Carey and Lea, 1832. 2 vols.

Even while the *Life ... of Columbus* was undergoing numerous revisions, Irving was engaged in the writing of two books which served to turn his attention back to the pure romantic style which had made him famous. The first was *The Conquest of Granada* (1829), the story of the capture of the last Moorish stronghold in Spain. The second was *The Alhambra* (1832), a Spanish sketch book filled with engaging stories based on folklore, and written by "Irving, the antiquarian romantic." The tales reveal Irving's love of ancient lore, his feeling for scenery, and his sentiment for simple, tranquilly suffering, well-meaning, and ultimately good people. All of the uneven qualities of *The Sketch Book* of 1820 are found again in this collection, but as before, his best writing is so smooth and polished that his reputation as the first among writers of English prose was revived. *The Alhambra* has been translated sixteen times into Spanish, and it remains an important item in the bibliography of Granada's history.

**Washington Irving (1783-1859).** *Life of George Washington.* New York: G. P. Putnam & Co., 1855-59. 5 vols.

Students of literature study Irving as a stylist and as a forerunner to Poe (see Case 6) in the development of the short story as a separate genre. Often Irving the biographer is overlooked, even though there is significant work in this category. The promise and accomplishment of his biography of Columbus was, according to some critics, renewed in this work of his old age.

Beginning in 1851 at the age of sixty-eight, Irving reentered the world of the scholar. Since 1832 he had written three books about the American West, had served as secretary of the American legation in London and American ambassador to Spain, and had published miscellaneous other writings, including biographies of poet Margaret Miller Davidson, Oliver Goldsmith, and Mahomet (i.e., Muhammad), the founder of Islam. Now he submerged himself again in research, producing by 1855 the first of his five volumes on George Washington.

Contemporary critics were warm in their reviews. The historian William Prescott thought Irving had succeeded in making Washington "a being of flesh and blood, like ourselves." Others agreed that Irving had presented the facts "in the most lucid order." Indeed, Irving's biography was the most widely read for the rest of the century.

Twentieth-century critics are less kind. They recognize that despite the enormity of the task brought to completion by a man in his seventies, the work is too seldom graced with vestiges of Irving's former easy prose. Robert Spiller describes Irving's depiction as "a stolid marble bust" offered to the reader in "tired prose."

#### FLOOR CASES 3 & 4

**William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878).** *The Embargo; or, Sketches of the Times ... and Other Poems.* Second Edition. Boston: E.G. House, 1809.

William Cullen Bryant has been called "the first American to capture the spirit of English romanticism," "The American Wordsworth," and even at the time of his death (in sermons from the pulpit, in newspaper editorials, and in resolutions of civic and literary groups) "the first citizen of America." Although he never held



significant political office, his contributions as a poet, a newspaper editor, a patron of the arts, and a spokesman for liberal causes of the day led his contemporaries to eulogize him as “the ideal of a good and venerable man.”

Born at Cummington in western Massachusetts, Bryant was raised in a Calvinistic and Federalist environment. He took himself and the world very seriously, and his earliest writings reveal his social awareness. His first verses appeared in the Northampton *Hampshire Gazette* in 1807, and he saw his first book in print just one year later when his father arranged for the publication of *The Embargo*, a satirical attack on Jefferson’s methods of avoiding entanglement in the Napoleonic conflict.

The satire was published at Boston in 1808 and was credited to “a Youth of Thirteen.” It received kind notice in the literary periodical, *Monthly Anthology*, although the critic expressed doubt as to the authenticity of authorship by one so young. It is now generally agreed that the poem did profit by the editorial hands of Bryant’s father and Benjamin Whitwell, an established satirist of some skill. The second edition, shown here, includes the original poem, revised and expanded, as well as seven other poems written during the years of 1807 and 1808.

**William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878).** “Thanatopsis,” *The North American Review and Miscellaneous Journal*, 5:15 (September, 1817).

In the century since Bryant’s death, he has been remembered almost solely as a poet, the first American voice to sing of native flora and fauna such as the fringed gentian and bobolink rather than the primrose and nightingale of England. And of all his poems, the best-known, by far, is “Thanatopsis.” The writer of an obituary on Bryant published in the New York *Tribune* in 1878 said that “there are few people in the country who have not read it; almost every school reader contains it ....” The same statement could be made today.

According to popular belief, Bryant wrote a large part of the poem in 1811 when he was only sixteen, some attributing his interest in death to his study of English “graveyard” poets. Biographer Charles H. Brown, however, states that even in its first fragmentary versions, the poem “cannot be definitely assigned to the year 1811.” It may rather have been influenced by the deaths of friends and relatives in 1813.

But, whenever the poem was actually begun, there is no doubt that the middle portion as it is known today, beginning with the half-line “— Yet a few days and thee ...,” appeared in print for the first time in the issue of the *North American*

*Review* shown here. It was submitted by Bryant’s father, along with another blank-verse fragment, four untitled quatrains, and a translation and imitation of Horace. The publication not only incorrectly attributed authorship to Bryant’s father, but also printed the quatrains as if they were a part of the longer poem. In addition, the editors could not, apparently, publish a poem with no heading. They, therefore, coined from the Greek the title “Thanatopsis,” meaning a view or contemplation of death.

On loan from the Graduate Library.

**William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878).** “To a Waterfowl,” *The North American Review and Miscellaneous Journal*, 6:18 (March, 1818).

After consistent urging for additional contributions to *The North American Review*, Bryant submitted again via his father three poems, the most famous being the short lyric “To a Waterfowl.” This poem is said to have been composed after Bryant walked from Cummington to Plainfield, Massachusetts, on December 15, 1815. He had been admitted to the bar just the previous August, and was engaged during that winter in establishing his law practice in Plainfield. In one of his letters he says that he felt “very forlorn and desolate” during this walk. The sight of the solitary bird illuminated against the bright colors of the sunset, raised his spirits, and upon reaching his destination, he immediately sat down to write the poem.

Such a pleasant story may not be accurate. An early draft in Bryant’s handwriting dates the poem “Bridgewater, July, 1815.” Bryant lived in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, from June, 1814, until August, 1815, the period of his training under the well-known attorney and congressman, William Baylies.

On loan from the Graduate Library.

**William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878).** *Poems*. Cambridge [Massachusetts]: Printed by Hilliard and Metcalf, 1821.

Bryant’s contributions to *The North American Review* were so well received at Boston that his admirers succeeded in getting him invited to write a poem for the Phi Beta Kappa Society to be read at the Harvard College commencement in August, 1821. Of the Boston literati whom Bryant met on that occasion, the most significant was Richard Henry Dana, who, like Bryant, had been trained as a lawyer, but who



had left that profession to devote himself fully to literature. The lifetime friendship thus established led also to Bryant being persuaded to allow Dana to arrange the publication of some of his poems in a separate volume.

The result was this slim volume of fifty-four pages, appearing the first week of September, 1821. The collection included "Thanatopsis" in its final form. The introduction and conclusion to the middle portion published in 1817 were rewritten several times, but finally completed during this trip to Boston.

The *Poems* of 1821 have been called "a landmark in American literary history" even though at the time the volume sold slowly and no important journal in New England praised it except *The North American Review*. In reality, Bryant had become the foremost American poet of the day, but he was still an unknown.

**William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878).** *Poems*. Edited by Washington Irving. London: J. Andrews, 1832.

The decade between the 1821 *Poems* and this edition of 1832 was one of significant change for Bryant. After much deliberation, he finally gave up his practice of law, moving in 1825 to New York to attempt a career in literary journalism. He accepted the position as co-editor of the monthly *New York Review and Atheneum Magazine*, but soon found that he was expending his efforts on a magazine of precarious and declining fortunes. In 1826, he was rescued from poverty by an offer to serve as assistant editor of the New York *Evening Post*, beginning an association which continued for the rest of his life.

By 1832, Bryant had done much to establish himself in a satisfactory profession. He had also written many new poems, and was ready to bring out a volume more substantial than the previous collection of eight. The 1832 New York edition included eighty-nine poems, of which only five had not already appeared in print. The volume was successful enough to cause *The North American Review* to pronounce it "the best volume of American verse that has ever appeared," and to prompt Bryant to send a second copy to Washington Irving who was at that time in London. Although Bryant's name was not unknown in England, Irving encountered several rejections before finally persuading a Bond Street bookseller, J. Andrews, to publish the book. The English reception was generally friendly with reviews appearing in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, and in other journals.

*The Talisman for MDCCCXXX*. New York: E. Bliss, 1829.

Once Bryant was established with the *Evening Post*, thereby relieving for a while at least his financial worries, he entered wholeheartedly into the social and cultural life of New York City. He became acquainted with James Fenimore Cooper, was welcomed into Cooper's Bread and Cheese Club, a gathering by invitation of the city's leading artists and writers. He met the painters Samuel F. B. Morse, Thomas Cole, and Asher B. Durand, beginning friendships which would last throughout their lives. His long-standing support of American art and artists began, often expressed in his *Post* editorials.

Bryant also developed literary friendships with Robert C. Sands, Gulian C. Verplanck, James Kirke Paulding, fellow poets Fitz-Greene Halleck and James Abraham Hillhouse, and many others. He collaborated with Sands and Verplanck in publishing little volumes of miscellanies in imitation of the gift annuals that were then popular in England. The three enjoyed greatly the creation of tales, essays, and poems by the fictitious writer, Francis Herbert. *The Talisman* was warmly received in 1827, and the publisher Elam Bliss prevailed on the authors to repeat their performance two more times.

Bryant contributed a good number of original poems and tales to this collaboration. In the 1830 volume, shown here, he included his tribute to Thomas Cole, admonishing the artist to view the different places he will visit in Europe through the eyes of his American idealism. Bryant consistently praised the "earlier, wilder image" of American landscape which the Hudson River School artists captured on their canvases (see Wall Cases 3 and 4).

**William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878).** *A Funeral Oration, Occasioned by the Death of Thomas Cole ...* 1848. New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1848.

Bryant's speech at the time of Cole's death was delivered before the National Academy of Design, an organization begun in 1826 by Cole and twenty-nine other artists, and dedicated to the formulation of a specifically American ethic in the arts. Literary artists worked side by side with visual artists in the Academy. Bryant became its "Professor of Mythology" delivering lectures on this topic to its members.

The 1848 address was the first of several tributes which Bryant was eventually to pay to old friends, including Cooper, Irving, Halleck, and Verplanck.

**William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878).** *Letters of a Traveller; or, Notes of Things Seen in Europe and America.* New York: George P. Putnam, 1850.

Travelling, which Bryant loved so much, had been limited to New England until the 1830s when the *Evening Post* was sufficiently successful and stable to allow for his absence. Beginning in 1832, Bryant travelled to Washington, D.C., and then to Illinois to visit his brothers on the frontier. This first overwhelming exposure to the vast distances and level lands of Illinois resulted in "The Prairies," a work C. H. Brown describes as "one of his most noble blank-verse poems."

In 1834, the Bryant family began its first of several visits to Europe, a wide tour of the South, and a jaunt to Cuba. Bryant's habit was to send frequent letters to the *Evening Post*, describing and reflecting on the sights, the history, and the people. Such travelogues were a feature of the paper in the 1840s, and in 1850, on the suggestion of Richard Henry Dana, Bryant gathered them into a book. *Letters of a Traveller* contains fifty-three reports, beginning with a letter written in Paris on August 9, 1834, and ending with another from Paris dated September 13, 1849.

**William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878), ed.** *A Library of Poetry and Song: Being Choice Selections from the Best Poets....* New York: J. B. Ford and Company, 1871.

Bryant's reputation as a poet, and then as an editor, tends to obscure his work in American literary criticism. In Robert E. Spiller's *Literary History of the United States*, he is identified as a pioneer in this field, the author of America's "earliest systematic study of the nature of poetry."

As early as 1825 when Bryant was invited to lecture on poetry in a series sponsored by the *New York Review and Atheneum Magazine*, Bryant articulated his definitions of poetry in terms of morality, imagination, originality, emotion, and simplicity. He was consistent throughout his career in his belief in the obligation of poetry to teach "direct lessons of wisdom." Spiller concludes that Bryant's lectures and reviews "served both major and minor poets for many years as a gauge of what poetry should be and do ... [and] his influence extended down the century to form the mainstream of American verse."

In the "Introduction" to the anthology shown here, Bryant reiterates the familiar themes. It is a tribute to Bryant himself that the publishers include in their "Preface" the assurance to the reader that "every poem of the collection has taken its place in the book only after passing the cultured criticism of Mr. William Cullen Bryant."

*Under Open Sky: Poets on William Cullen Bryant.* Edited by Norbert Krapf; wood engravings by John De Pol. Roslyn, New York: The Stone House Press, 1986.

More than a century after the death of William Cullen Bryant, poets, students, and scholars are discovering him anew. In 1975 an extensive bibliography of books and articles about Bryant and his work was published. In 1978, a centennial conference, "William Cullen Bryant and His America," was held at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York. And in 1986 appeared this artistic tribute to the poet whom Walt Whitman honored for creating the "first interior verse-throbs of a mighty world...."

Editor Norbert Krapf lives and teaches on Long Island, near Bryant's retreat of "Cedarmere," in Roslyn. A growing acquaintance with the poetry, the man, and his world prompted Krapf to conceive the idea of a book of writings by fellow poets about this once-famous and pre-eminent poet. His invitations to contribute resulted in poems and prose pieces by twenty contemporary American authors.

*Under the Open Sky* was designed by Morris A. Gelfand and printed by him at the Stone House Press which he operates out of the basement of a house Bryant had built in Roslyn. This edition is limited to 185 signed and numbered copies, of which only 140 were for sale.

*William Cullen Bryant and the Hudson River School of Landscape Painting, May 19-July 19, 1981.* Roslyn, N.Y.: Nassau County Museum of Fine Art [1981]

It is only proper that the man who did so much in support of American art and artists should in return be the subject of some of the finest portraitists of the day. One of the earliest was painted in 1827 by Henry Inman (1801-1846), a member with Bryant in the Sketch Club, the successor to Cooper's Bread and Cheese Club. The original is watercolor and pencil on paper, and is in the collection of the New York Historical Society.

The painting done by Cornelius Ver Bryck (1813-1844) is not signed or dated, but is thought to be from around 1841. At that time Ver Bryck had completed his studies with Samuel F. B. Morse, had just been elected to the National Academy of Design, and was in contact with both Thomas Cole and Bryant. The portrait is oil on canvas and is now in the Long Island Historical Society in Brooklyn, New York.

The 1866 portrait is by Daniel Huntington (1816-1906), brother-in-law of C. Ver Bryck. It is oil on canvas, and is presently housed in the Brooklyn Museum.

Brooklyn, New York. Huntington also studied under Morse at the National Academy and later with Inman. His early work clearly associates him with the Hudson River School.

On loan from the Fine Arts Library.

## FLOOR CASE 5

**James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851).** *Precaution, a Novel.* New York: A. T. Goodrich & Co., 1820. 2 vols.

James Fenimore Cooper has been praised and honored for achieving a considerable number of "firsts." He is first in the line of major American novelists. He created the modern tale of the sea and was the first to make effective use of the frontier. He wrote the first American Utopia and the first American novels to describe the lives of succeeding generations of characters. Among his first four books are two revolutionary ones, *The Pioneers* and *The Pilot*; and in *The Last of the Mohicans* he composed what is perhaps the classic tale of frontier adventure.

Yet for all of these achievements, his reputation has generally declined for over a century, slipping to such a degree that many of his novels are now unread or relegated to the rank of children's books. Recent critics argue that such an assessment does not account for the artistry and depth that do indeed exist in his best work. They say that too much emphasis has been placed on the uneven quality of his writing, on his creation of shallow characters and contrived plots, and on Cooper as a social critic, with the unfortunate result of too much attention on his weaker novels. Cooper has always been acknowledged as historically significant in the development of American literature; now he perhaps should be reassessed for the intrinsic value of his work.

Certainly, however, his first novel *Precaution* (1820) deserves no such reassessment. Written on a dare from his wife in response to his boast that he could write a novel better than the one he was reading, it contains all of the weaknesses of the amateur writer attempting to describe a kind of life he knew only from books. It is an uncritical imitation of the English novel of domestic manners, published anonymously, possibly in the hope of passing it off as the work of an Englishman.

**James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851).** *The Spy; a Tale of the Neutral Ground.* New York: Wiley & Halstead, 1821. 2 vols.

The novel which brought Cooper to the attention of the literary world was this one, his second novel, written at age thirty-one after years of activities far removed from the arts. Born in Burlington, New Jersey, Cooper was raised in Cooperstown, New York, on lands acquired by his father along the upper Susquehanna River. His home was as close to being manorial as the age and place could afford, yet it was at the same time surrounded by wilderness. He, therefore, was exposed in childhood to the themes that recur throughout his work: man's relation to nature, his responsibilities to society and the requirements of civilization, and the frequent conflict between these two forces.

*The Spy* is an historical novel of the American Revolution. By turning to an American subject and selecting an American setting—the neutral ground between British and American outposts in Westchester County—Cooper wrote with a sure sense of the physical landscape, even using it to introduce some of the fundamental issues of the book. Harvey Birch, the double agent, carries out his work in the neutral zone, a physical and moral no-man's-land which critic Donald Ringe says "reflects the ambiguities that pervade the entire novel."

*The Spy* met with prompt success. Within months of the appearance of the first edition shown here, new editions were called for in New York and London and a dramatic revision was on the New York stage. Within the year a French translation was published, followed shortly thereafter by translations in German, Spanish, and Italian.

**James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851).** *The Pioneers, or the Sources of the Susquehanna. A Descriptive Tale.* New York: Charles Wiley, 1823. 2 vols.

Instead of following the success of his historical novel with others like it, Cooper turned in his next work to a description of the frontier settlement of Cooperstown and Otsego County as they were in 1793 and 1794. Here the character of Leatherstocking makes his first appearance, and Cooper establishes the themes that unite the series of the five great "Leatherstocking tales" upon which most of his reputation rests.

*The Pioneers* draws its fundamental meaning from the description of the society it portrays and the relation of that society to the natural environment. Leatherstocking represents man with nature, an individual following an unwritten

moral law which is in conflict with Judge Marmaduke Temple, who, although in sympathy with Leatherstocking, must resort to civil law, the law of society, in order to enable civilization to survive on the frontier.

Although *The Pioneers* is read today principally because of its connection with the Leatherstocking series, it was a success in its own right in 1823. As with *The Spy*, an English edition came out within months, followed immediately by a French translation, with a German edition in 1824, and editions in other languages within a few years. Carl Van Doren explains this success by reminding readers of the late twentieth century that Cooper's writings did not in his day suffer from what we may view as stately, even stilted, language, lofty sentiments, and top-heavy affectations. He says that "contemporary readers took such qualities in a romance as much for granted as they took contemporary costumes on men and women."

**James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851).** *The Pilot; a Tale of the Sea.* New York: Charles Wiley, 1823. 2 vols

During the same period that Cooper was writing and publishing *The Pioneers*, he was working on the third of the early novels which capitalized on his previous life experiences. After an education which included his childhood at Cooperstown, two years under a tutor at Albany, and three years at Yale, it was decided that the boy, then sixteen, should go to sea in preparation for entering the navy. The result was one year as a common sailor and three years' service as a midshipman in the United States Navy, from which he resigned shortly after his marriage in 1811. These experiences allowed him to write with precision and authenticity in his tales of the sea. *The Pilot* was the first of these and though he could not know it, Cooper was setting the mode in this novel for all later stories of the sea, and more or less determining their tone.

**James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851).** *The Last of the Mohicans; a Narrative of 1757.* Philadelphia: H. C. Carey & I. Lea, 1826. 2 vols.

By the time Cooper had completed *The Spy*, *The Pioneers*, and *The Pilot*, he had identified the characteristic materials, techniques, and themes which were to dominate his work for nearly thirty years. He had developed his tales in the New York past, the Northern frontier, and on the high seas. Literary historians agree that seldom was he to show his best talents outside of these three territories.

Yet by 1823, Cooper was just beginning to perfect his skills, and deepen his artistry. Four of the Leatherstocking tales were still to be written, two within the decade and two not until he had matured artistically and psychologically. Regardless of these finer points, however, *The Last of the Mohicans* is for many the best of the series because of its breathless, unrelenting suspense. Cooper's narrative skill keeps the plot filled with action. He also is able to include a study of Native Americans which, although quite unrealistic, does ascribe to these characters those virtues and vices which he thought worthy of portrayal in human nature.

**James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851).** *The Deerslayer; or, the First War-Path.* Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1841. 2 vols.

In the five novels of the Leatherstocking series, the main character has a variety of names. He is Natty Bumppo in *The Pioneers* (1823), Hawkeye in *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), Pathfinder in *The Pathfinder* (1840), and Deerslayer in *The Deerslayer* (1841). The five books also depict him at all stages of his adult life from the youth of Deerslayer to the old age and death of The Trapper.

In the creation of the last of the series, Cooper was concerned with the craft of characterization. The novel is much more than a description of wilderness or the repeated pattern of chase, escape, and battle. Here Cooper completes the delineation of his immortal character, emphasizing his essential loneliness and his kinship with the forces of nature. Various critics find differing aspects of the novels of this series to praise and criticize, but most agree that *The Deerslayer* is a masterpiece.

**James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851).** *The Crater; or, Vulcan's Peak. A Tale of the Pacific.* New York: Burgess, Stringer & Company, 1847. 2 vols.

One of Cooper's late novels, *The Crater* is also America's first important Utopian allegory. Deeply affected during the 1830s and 1840s by social and economic changes in the United States, Cooper spent much of his energy in criticism, satire, and legal battles. By the late 1840s he was convinced that American society was in a state of decay because the moral concepts upon which a democracy must be based had been lost. This novel was his attempt to convey as clearly as possible this message to his contemporary audience. Although it is an interesting statement of Cooper's mature social philosophy, it is not successful as a work of art.

*The Crater* was printed first in Philadelphia for Burgess, Stringer and Com-



pany, but by the time the publishers were ready for distribution in October, 1847, the British firm of Richard Bentley had already issued their edition which was in three volumes bound in boards. The American practice of issuing Cooper's novels in two volumes in paper wrappers at \$ 0.25 per volume began in 1841 when his publishers, Lea and Blanchard, experimented with the new format in an effort to increase sales.

## FLOOR CASE 6

Probably more than any other American author, Edgar Allan Poe—as a personality—has appealed to popular imagination. To many, he might even be a figure out of one of his own stories or poems: mysterious, wild, abnormal. Both the personality and his creations have been the subject of numerous critiques and analyses, and the debate concerning his literary merit is far from over. To Tennyson he was “the most original American genius.” To Emerson he was “the jingle man.” To William Butler Yeats he was “always and for all lands a great lyric poet.” But to Henry James, enthusiasm for Poe was “the mask of a decidedly primitive stage of reflection.” There is even controversy about the facts of Poe's life, enhanced certainly by his own attempts to fabricate an impressive autobiography.

For all of these disagreements, however, he undoubtedly made significant contributions to the development of American literature, as a poet, as a literary critic, as a pioneer of science fiction and of the detective story, and as the undisputed master of horror and mystery. Such achievements are even more impressive when his short life and limited production are considered. His fiction amounts to only about seventy stories and his poems number scarcely fifty.

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849). *Tales*. New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1845.

Of Poe's short stories, all but perhaps seven or eight were written by the time the collection shown here was published in 1845. He had put together twenty-five of his tales five years earlier with the publication of *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, and although they were favorably reviewed, few copies sold, and Poe earned nothing from the endeavor.

This collection contains many of the stories for which he is most famous today, including “The Black Cat,” “The Fall of the House of Usher,” and the three tales of ratiocination, “The Murders of the Rue Morgue,” “The Mystery of Marie Roget,” and “The Purloined Letter.” The opening tale, “The Gold Bug,” was Poe's most popular story in his own day. In contrast to the ten dollars he could usually expect for a story, this one won the hundred-dollar prize offered in 1843 by the *Philadelphia Dollar Newspaper*.

Bibliographer John W. Robertson reports that the twelve stories in this collection were not selected by Poe but by Evert Duyckinck who was literary advisor for Wiley and Putnam. Poe resented the selection as not properly representing the various types of stories he had composed, particularly in the omission of psychological tales such as “Ligeia” and “Morella.”

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849). *Histoires Extraordinaires*. Traduction de Charles Baudelaire. Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1856.

Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), the French Romantic poet, is often cited as the man responsible for introducing the works of Poe to Europe. Soon after Poe's death, he began to write appreciations of Poe, essays published in 1852 and 1856. In addition, he wrote prefaces on the life and work of Poe which he included with his translations of Poe's stories. The volume shown here was followed within months by his *Nouvelles Histoires Extraordinaires par Edgar Poe* (Paris, 1857).

Baudelaire admired Poe's logical formulas for the form of poetry, and for the attempt to appeal to all the senses in conveying a single effect. Literary historian Eric Carlson remarks that to Baudelaire, Poe was the “poète maudit,” the symbol of “the alienated artist in frustrated rebellion against materialism.”

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849). *The Literati: Some Honest Opinions about Authorial Merits and Demerits....* New York: J. S. Redfield, 1850.

Throughout his short life, Poe's work as a literary critic and editor of various magazines and periodicals led to a small but significant body of critical writings. One of his most important contributions was his review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's collection of stories, *Twice-Told Tales* (see Case 7). The review was first published in the May, 1842, issue of *Graham's Magazine*, a monthly periodical which Poe edited for



about one year. Parts of the review were revised and included in an article, "Tale-Writing," published in *Godey's Lady's Book* in November, 1847. Rufus Wilmot Griswold included it in volume three of his *Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (4 volumes, 1850-56) shown here.

The most famous passage in this review is the paragraph beginning, "A skillful literary artist has constructed a tale." This section is Poe's statement about the importance of a single, preconceived effect which the author of a tale should strive to create. Such an overriding impression should be emotionally as well as intellectually experienced by the reader, and every detail, no matter how seemingly irrelevant, should contribute to the desired effect or atmosphere.

**Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849).** *Tales of Mystery and Imagination.* Illustrated by Harry Clarke. New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1933.

One of the few stories which Poe wrote after the publication of *Tales* in 1845 was "The Cask of Amontillado." It first appeared in the November, 1846, issue of *Godey's Lady's Book*, a monthly magazine which had published Poe material as early as 1834. It is a brilliantly written story of horror and retribution. The theme of burial alive which Poe had previously treated in "The Black Cat" and "The Premature Burial" is combined here with the idea of punishment—revenge for "the thousand injuries of Fortunato" which the protagonist, Montresor, had suffered. British book illustrator Harry Clarke recreates Fortunato's mounting terror and Montresor's sense of satisfaction as he prepares to lay in place the last stone.

**Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849).** *Poems.* East Aurora, N. Y.: The Roycrofters, 1901.

Just as Poe's short stories have attracted artists in an attempt to capture on their canvases the single memorable effect Poe created in prose, so have his poems led illustrators and book artists to publish beautifully crafted editions. One of the earliest was this production made by Elbert Hubbard (1856-1915) and his assistants at the Roycroft Shop in East Aurora, New York. Inspired by a visit to England and specifically to the Kelmscott Press, the shop of the famous poet, artist, and printer William Morris (1834-1896) who in large part has been credited with the revival of the arts and crafts movement in late nineteenth-century England, Hubbard began his private press in 1896, and within a few years brought out numerous books. Although differing widely in design and execution, they generally revealed a pursuit of his conception of ideal "Beauty."

The decorative title page and sketch of Poe in this volume were drawn by Samuel Warner, an American artist based in Scituate, Massachusetts.

**Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849).** *Poems.* Engravings and Ornaments by J.-G. Daragnès. New York: Charles Breyner Art Publications, 1950.

This finely illustrated edition of twelve selected poems has been prepared with the assistance of Jean-Gabriella Daragnès (1886-1950), a well-known French painter, engraver, illustrator, and printer. Although established first as a landscape painter, he soon turned to the illustration of literary works and was successful because of his subtle interpretations. He illustrated works by Goethe, Valéry, Baudelaire, Stendahl, Kipling, R. L. Stevenson, and many others. In addition to this volume of poems, he also illustrated a collection of Poe's tales entitled *Histoires Grotesques et Sérieuses*.

**Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849).** *The Raven; Havran.* Translated by Otto F. Babler. [Olomouc, Czechoslovakia: Stanislav Vrbík, 1930]

Of all Poe's writings, probably the best known is the poem "The Raven." Written during a time when his wife, Virginia Clemm, was dying of consumption, there is no doubt that the poem has a direct relevance to circumstances in his own life. It combines two themes central to much of Poe's writings: the idea of the beautiful, dead, "lost Lenore" and the lonely, bookish man who is confronted with his own inner self in the form of the raven. Artistically, rhythmically, and emotionally Poe created in this poem a work of haunting melancholy, and one which has been read and quoted as often, if not more often, than any other in our literature.

"The Raven" has been translated into a great many languages (even into Latin), has been rewritten as a play and set to music, and is frequently published by itself in fine, artistic editions, such as the one shown here.

## FLOOR CASE 7

**Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864).** *Twice-Told Tales*. Boston: American Stationers Co., 1837.

Of all the authors who contributed to the emergence of American literature during the first half of the nineteenth century, Nathaniel Hawthorne has held since his death in 1864 a sure position as one of our most significant writers. His reputation has survived the vagaries of literary fashions, his work is consistently read by succeeding generations, and scholars continue to probe and analyze his tales and romances in their search for an understanding of his achievement. T. S. Eliot identified Hawthorne's most enduring quality to be his observation of moral life which, he says, "has solidity, has permanence, the permanence of art. It will always be of use...."

Hawthorne himself, however, was not so certain of his literary worth. After graduating in 1825 from Bowdoin College, he returned to his mother's home in Salem, Massachusetts, where he remained for twelve years, devoted to his writing and engrossed in the task of learning his craft. The fiction he published was done anonymously or pseudonymously. By 1830, at least thirty-six of his stories were published in the annual *Token* and in various periodicals, including the *New England Magazine* and the *Salem Gazette*. All of these were without acknowledgment of the author, a situation which so annoyed Hawthorne's friend, Horatio Bridge, that unknown to Hawthorne he arranged for the publication of a collection of tales, supplying \$250 to guarantee the publishers against loss. *Twice-Told Tales* sold enough to allow the publishers to reimburse the \$250, and although not a "splash" in the literary world, Hawthorne's career was definitely well begun.

**Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864).** *Mosses from an Old Manse*. London: Wiley & Putnam, 1846. 2 vols.

In the nine years between the publications of *Twice-Told Tales* and the collection shown here, Hawthorne's reputation slowly grew, but his financial condition remained precarious. The \$100 which he had earned from *Twice-Told Tales* was not

sufficient for a man contemplating marriage. Therefore, from 1839 to 1841 he worked as a measurer of salt and coal in the Boston Custom House, moving to the utopian community of Brook Farm early in 1841. After concluding that such a community would not be a satisfactory and economical home, he returned to Concord and set up housekeeping at the Old Manse with his bride, Sophia Peabody.

The tales and sketches which Hawthorne wrote during this period were in part included in a second series of *Twice-Told Tales* published in 1842. Hawthorne also produced a good amount of material for young readers, including *Grandfather's Chair* (1841), *Famous Old People* (1841), and *Biographical Stories for Children* (1842). By 1846, he gathered together this collection of twenty-three tales, containing some of his best work, notably "Rappaccini's Daughter," "The Birth Mark," and "Young Goodman Brown." Although generally well received, both Poe and Melville felt it lacked the originality of the 1837 collection.

The English edition, shown here, appeared a few months after the American edition, which was brought out by the same publishers in June, 1846.

**Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864).** *The Scarlet Letter, a Romance*. Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1850.

Even before *Mosses from an Old Manse* was published, Hawthorne secured an appointment as Surveyor of the Salem Custom House at an annual salary of \$1,200. Though his job was not demanding, Hawthorne wrote little during his three years there. Dismissed in January, 1849, when the Democrats went out of power, Hawthorne returned to his proper occupation, and using the skill which had been honed throughout all the years of writing tales, Hawthorne wrote within the short span of four months the book which many consider to be his masterpiece and which is today an American classic.

*The Scarlet Letter*, an intense, tragic study of the psychological effects of adultery on four people, made Hawthorne famous, and prompted him to proceed immediately into a time of intense literary activity. By April, 1851, his second romance, *The House of the Seven Gables*, was published, followed in 1852 by *The Blithedale Romance*. His interest in children's literature led to *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys* (1852) and *Tanglewood Tales for Girls and Boys* (1853), books which literary historian Carl Van Doren calls "lasting triumphs of their mode." In addition, he gathered together a new collection of tales, *The Snow-Image and Other Twice-Told Tales* (1851), and brought out new editions of *Twice-Told Tales* (1851) and *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1854). He had plans for another romance, "more genial than the last."

But it was not to be. With the end of this period, his inspired creativity was at an end, and it would be eight years before he published another romance—*The Marble Faun*, his last completed work of fiction.

**Felix Octavius Carr Darley (1822-1888).** *Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter, with Illustrations by F. O. C. Darley.* Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1884.

The success of Darley's illustrations of works by Washington Irving (see Wall Case 1) as well as those by Cooper, Longfellow, and Dickens, led to this publication of his illustrations of *The Scarlet Letter*. The volume was first published in 1879 under the title *Compositions in Outline from Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter*. The twelve plates are each introduced by a page of letterpress consisting of the full passage being depicted by the artist.

In this scene, Hester Prynne makes her first appearance before the townspeople after the birth of her baby, Pearl. Darley chooses to have Hester use the baby to hide the "fantastically embroidered" letter 'A,' which was "illuminated upon her bosom."

**Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864).** *The House of the Seven Gables, a Romance.* Boston: Ticknor, Reed and Fields, 1851.

With the publication of *The House of the Seven Gables* just a few months after *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne moved away from his studies of seventeenth-century Puritanism which had previously absorbed so much of his attention. Instead, he examined the infinite reaches of retributive action from the unseen world of a Puritan settlement to the contemporary, strangely comic society of the present Pyncheon family. Although some readers prefer this romance to *The Scarlet Letter*, most agree with Henry James when he said that *The House of the Seven Gables* is "more like a prologue to a great novel than a great novel itself." Critics find that the romance does not reach a satisfactory conclusion, even though they acknowledge that no American novelist before Hawthorne had undertaken to meditate on the interpenetration of past and present, a theme which later writers such as James, William Faulkner, and Robert Penn Warren attempted to develop further.

It has long been recognized that an important element in appreciating Hawthorne's art is an acceptance of his distinction between the romance and the novel. In the "Preface," shown here, Hawthorne delineates the differences, explain-

ing his preference for the romance. It is unfortunate that he never developed these ideas into a more sustained definition of his theory of fiction.

**Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864).** *The Marble Faun; or, The Romance of Monte Beni.* Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1860. 2 vols.

The eight years between *The Blithedale Romance* and this work, the last piece of fiction published during Hawthorne's lifetime, were full of activities very different from anything in his earlier experiences. In 1853, he accepted an appointment as United States consul at Liverpool where he remained until 1858, at which time he left for a prolonged visit to Italy. His observations of England resulted in a series of essays first published in the *Atlantic Monthly* and then collected in 1863 under the title *Our Old Home*. The notebooks describing the sights of Italy found their way, sometimes unrevised, into *The Marble Faun*, a romance which asks again Hawthorne's old questions about the ruthless influences of the past, the blight of wrong upon the completely innocent, the fellowship of sinners, and the regenerative power of sin—all transferred to an Italian setting.

Hawthorne began *The Marble Faun* in Florence in 1858, and revised and completed it in England before returning to the United States in 1860. His last years saw no further literary success. He began several new romances, and four fragments were published after his death, but in none of these was he able to overcome the debilitating effect which the Civil War had on his creative imagination.

## FLOOR CASE 8

**Herman Melville (1819-1891).** *Moby Dick; or, The Whale.* A novel by Herman Melville; paintings by LeRoy Neiman; preface by Jacques-Yves Cousteau. [Mount Vernon, N. Y.]: The Artist's Limited Edition, 1975.

This new edition, of which there are only 1500 copies, contains thirteen illustrations by LeRoy Neiman. The paintings are accompanied by short notes by the artist in which he expresses his own interpretation of Melville's story. For the painting shown here he says "Mortally wounded, smashed, the Pequod, its riggings

like church spires, sinks and slips silently into its burial at sea." Neiman summarizes his attitude toward his subject in his final note:

With Ahab finished, the story of revenge is done.  
It was no contest. Ahab, no match. Moby Dick is  
the victor. Total annihilation.

Biblical in feeling, sacred in theme—only in this  
mood and way could I paint Moby Dick.

L. N.

### READING ROOM CASE

**Walt Whitman (1819-1892).** "Franklin Evans; or the Inebriate. A Tale of the Times,"  
*The New World*, 2:10, extra series no. 34 (November 1842).

Much of Whitman's early years was spent wandering around Long Island, Brooklyn, and Manhattan, acquiring an education that had little to do with formal schooling. As early as age thirteen he began an association with newspapers and magazines which lasted for nearly thirty years. His work as a printer's devil and a typesetter hardly seemed the best training for the man who would become one of America's most original poets.

Certainly his early writings did little to reveal his real gifts. The few poems he printed were sentimental, melancholy, and melodramatic, and his prose imitated much of the reform literature being written during the 1830s and 1840s. Such is this work, "Franklin Evans," a temperance novel of routine subject matter, full of bombast and bathos.

This first separately published work by Whitman is extremely rare, even though between 20,000 and 25,000 copies were sold. The high number, which netted Whitman almost \$200, could possibly be explained by the fact that the work was advertised as "a thrilling romance by one of the best novelists in this country."

**Walt Whitman (1819-1892).** *Leaves of Grass*. Brooklyn, New York, 1855.

This copy of Whitman's principal work once belonged to Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882). On its flyleaf is inscribed: "F. B. Sanborn, Nov 9th 1855, This book Mr. Emerson received from the author and I from Mr. Emerson."

Emerson was one of the first to recognize Whitman's genius and wrote him on July 21, 1855, a letter praising the book as "the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed." This letter also contains the famous words, "I greet you at the beginning of a great career, which yet must have had a long foreground somewhere, for such a start."

The first edition of *Leaves of Grass* contained only twelve untitled poems and a long preface in prose. Less than nine hundred copies were printed in July, 1855, with the author assisting the printer in the type composition and presswork. The volume was first placed for sale at two dollars, but was later reduced to one dollar. Very few copies sold, Whitman giving almost the entire edition to critics and friends.

The man to whom Emerson gave this copy, Franklin Benjamin Sanborn (1831-1917), was a young admirer of Emerson and a recent graduate of Harvard College. He devoted his long and respected career to journalism, philanthropy, and literature, being remembered largely for his biographical studies of several New England writers, including Emerson, Thoreau, Bronson Alcott, and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

### WALL CASE 1

**Felix Octavius Carr Darley (1822-1888).** *Illustrations of Rip Van Winkle*. [New York: Published by the American Art Union], 1848.

The American artist, Felix O. C. Darley, had already established a reputation for his facility in caricature when in 1848 the managers of the American Art Union commissioned him to illustrate Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." He also illustrated several of Irving's works for the publisher G. P. Putnam, much to the delight of publisher and author alike. Irving at one point is said



to have remarked that no other artist had been able "to embody my conception of Diedrich Knickerbocker."

Darley worked mostly in outline, etching his drawings on stone. He was praised for the grace and vigor of characterization which he was able to achieve particularly when depicting American humor and American scenes. Because of these special talents he was commissioned to illustrate other major authors of the period, including Cooper, Longfellow, Dickens, and Hawthorne (see Case 7).

On display: Plates 1, 4, 5, 6.

## WALL CASE 2

**Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849).** *Shadow, Silence.* [Pilsen, Czech Republic: Vladimír Zikes, 1926]

The two tales selected for this publication are not among Poe's better known stories. "The Shadow. A Fable" was first published in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in September, 1835. Poe included it in volume one of his *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840), and it was republished in the May 31, 1845, issue of the *Broadway Journal* with the title "Shadow—a Parable."

"Silence—a Fable" was originally Poe's contribution to *The Baltimore Book*, a Christmas annual brought out in 1837. The title then was "Siope—a Fable." Along with "The Shadow" it was included in the 1840 collection and republished in the *Broadway Journal*, in the issue for September 6, 1845. Poe changed the title for the 1845 appearance.

The lithographs shown here are by Czech artist Alois Bilek (1887-1960).

## WALL CASE 3

### THE HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL

During the late summer of 1825, a young artist took his first sketching trip up the Hudson River, creating landscapes of such distinction that later that year when three men of note saw them displayed in a New York frame-maker's shop, each purchased one. The artist's work was thereby quickly made known, and the Hudson River School was begun.

The artist was Thomas Cole, one of several painters of this period motivated by a profound love of nature in landscape, and the one who articulated in his poems and essays his belief that the wild and lovely continent of America was a proper theme of art.

The members of this school were certainly not of a single style, nor were they even limited in geography. During the next fifty years some artists moved west and south for the sources of their inspiration. Yet they were all united in their romantic vision, in their fidelity to nature, in their practice of sketching directly from nature, and in their attitude toward the wild young beauty of America. The twentieth-century resurgence of interest in their work reaffirms their role as creators of perhaps the most important art movement in nineteenth-century America, as well as their contribution toward the establishment of the arts in this country.

**Thomas Cole (1801-1848).** *In the Catskills* [photographic reproduction], 1837.

Oil on canvas. 39 x 63 in.  
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The sudden launching of Cole's artistic career in 1825 after the purchase of his landscapes by famous artists John Trumbull, William Dunlap, and Asher B. Durand occurred after he had attempted a number of occupations. Upon his arrival from England in America in 1818, he worked as a wood engraver, assisted his father in manufacturing wallpaper and oilcloth, painted portraits, and gave art lessons. In 1827, he settled in Catskill, New York, and, with the exception of visits abroad,



remained there for the rest of his life, spending much time walking and sketching in the open air.

Cole's position as leader, if not founder, of an artistic "movement" brought him into contact with the principal literary as well as visual artists of the day. He frequented James Fenimore Cooper's Bread and Cheese Club (see Cases 3, 4, and 5), established friendships with both Cooper and William Cullen Bryant, and became an exponent of the moral value of nature, a theme which penetrates the novels of Cooper, the poems of Bryant, and the paintings of most of the first generation artists of the Hudson River School.

On loan from the History of Art Department, Slide and Photograph Collection.

**Thomas Doughty (1793-1856).** *In the Catskills* [photographic reproduction], 1836.

Oil on canvas. 30 x 42 in.

Andover, Massachusetts, Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy.

Of all the predecessors to Thomas Cole and his followers, Thomas Doughty might be the single artist to claim Cole's mantle as founder of the Hudson River School. Originally apprenticed to a leather currier in his native Philadelphia, Doughty left this work in 1820 to pursue landscape painting as a profession. Success came early. By 1821 he had several orders to paint gentlemen's estates; in 1823 his paintings exhibited in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts were among those which first inspired Cole to try to better this example; and by 1825 he was painting widely in New England, New York, and Pennsylvania.

His associations with leading authors of the time indicate again the close linking of artists and writers in the early 19th century. Doughty illustrated scenes from James Fenimore Cooper's *The Pioneers*, and during the 1830s when he settled in Boston, one of his pupils was the brilliant and lovely invalid, Sophia Peabody, later to become Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Despite these years of considerable success, Doughty did not benefit from the popularity of the Hudson River School. By the 1850s he was obscure and forgotten, prompting William Cullen Bryant to issue in *The Crayon*, the New York journal and notice board of the mid-century landscape painters, a call for funds to help sustain the aging artist.

On loan from the History of Art Department, Slide and Photograph Collection.

**Asher Brown Durand (1796-1886).** *Kindred Spirits* [photographic reproduction], 1849.

Oil on canvas. 44 x 36 in.

New York Public Library.

At the time Durand took part in the discovery and promotion of Cole's early landscapes, he was already one of the leading engravers in America. Born in Jefferson Village, New Jersey, he became apprenticed at age sixteen to the well-known engraver Peter Maverick, and was selected at age twenty-four to engrave John Trumbull's great painting, "The Declaration of Independence." By the mid-1820s, he was engraving portraits, including a series called *The National Portrait Gallery*, landscapes, and illustrations for works by Irving and Cooper. On the urging of Trumbull and Luman Reed, a principal patron of the arts in New York, Durand gave up engraving and was soon occupied with portraits of the first seven presidents of the United States and with scenes again from Cooper and Irving. By the 1840s, he devoted himself almost exclusively to landscape painting, assuming, after Cole's untimely death, the position of foremost landscapist in America.

His masterpiece, "Kindred Spirits," was intended as a tribute to Thomas Cole (the figure on the left) and to the friendship of the painter-poet William Cullen Bryant (on the right). Since then it has come to be regarded as the embodiment of not only the Hudson River School and its beliefs, but also of those elements of romanticism so eloquently expressed by the literary authors of the period. Before Bryant's daughter Julia bequeathed it to the New York Public Library in 1904, it hung in Bryant's home, Cedarmere, in Roslyn, New York.

On loan from the History of Art Department, Slide and Photograph Collection.

**John Frederick Kensett (1818-1872).** *The Walking Tour* [photographic reproduction, n.d.]

Oil on canvas. 14 x 20 in.

Detroit Institute of Arts.

Among the second generation Hudson River artists were a number who, like Durand, came to painting from the profession of engraving. The chief of these was John Frederick Kensett. After being trained by his father and uncle, Kensett arrived in New York at the age of twenty-two to become one of a group of young engravers,

all of whom would make their names in American art: A. B. Durand, Thomas Pritchard Rossiter (1818-1871), and John William Casilear (1811-1893). In 1840 he went to Europe with these men to improve his techniques as an engraver, but stayed on until 1847, learning to paint.

Kensett was a conscientious and thoughtful follower of Durand, carting his oils and canvases into the field so as not to miss a single detail. Yet, along with other artists of the middle decades of the century, his mature work concentrated on capturing the effects of weather, light, and air. Thus, the Luminists, as they were called, often went beyond the older masters, while still maintaining the meticulous eye for detail and generally adhering to the primary precepts of Durand and Cole.

On loan from the History of Art Department, Slide and Photograph Collection.

**Jasper Francis Cropsey (1823-1900).** *View of Kaaterskill House* [photographic reproduction], 1855.

Oil on canvas. 29 x 44 in.  
Minneapolis, Institute of Arts.

Jasper F. Cropsey had one of the longest active painting careers of the period, stretching from about 1840 to the end of the century, even though his first profession was actually architecture. The most prolific of the second generation Hudson River artists, his early works are remarkably similar to Cole's in conception, color, and handling. After 1863, he devoted himself mainly to the painting of autumn scenes, using the brilliant new chemical pigments in the creation of more open and light-filled compositions, a shift paralleling the direction of the Luminists.

On loan from the History of Art Department, Slide and Photograph Collection.

#### WALL CASE 4

**Thomas Cole (1801-1848).** *View of White Mountains, New Hampshire* [photographic reproduction], 1828.

Oil on canvas. 21.5 x 35 in.  
Hartford, Connecticut, Wadsworth Atheneum.

After having helped to introduce the Catskills and the Hudson River Valley to his fellow landscape painters, Cole turned his attention to the White Mountains, a favorite artist's resort throughout the century, and also to the Adirondacks. His most famous painting resulting from his excursions to the Adirondack Mountains is "Schroon Lake," completed about ten years after he visited the site twice in the mid-1830s, the second visit in the company of Mr. and Mrs. Asher B. Durand.

On loan from the History of Art Department, Slide and Photograph Collection.

**Thomas Cole (1801-1848).** *The Oxbow* [photographic reproduction], 1836.

Oil on canvas. 51.5 x 76 in.  
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

This view of the Connecticut River was a favorite for several landscape artists. It was painted again in 1844-1846 by Frederick Edwin Church (1826-1900), a pupil of Cole's at that time, and destined to become one of America's best known landscape painters at home and abroad during the late 1850s and 1860s.

On loan from the History of Art Department, Slide and Photograph Collection.

**Asher Brown Durand (1796-1886).** *Monument Mountain* [photographic reproduction], c.1853.

Oil on canvas. 28 x 42 in.  
Detroit Institute of Arts.

One of several paintings illustrating a poem by Bryant is this one carrying

the same title as the poem. Appearing first in the *United States Literary Gazette* in 1824, Bryant had actually begun work on the poem in 1816. It is a tale in blank verse based on an Indian legend recounting the story of a girl who jumps to her death from a high cliff after having fallen in love with her cousin, an attachment forbidden by the laws of her tribe. In an explanatory note Bryant said that Monument Mountain is a craggy precipice overlooking the valley of the Housatonic River in the Berkshire Mountains. In his painting, Durand appears to be emphasizing not the horror of the girl's death, but rather "... the lovely and the wild / Mingled in harmony on Nature's face," lines of the poem in which Bryant sets the tone for the tale and introduces the theme.

On loan from the History of Art Department, Slide and Photograph Collection.

**Asher Brown Durand (1796-1886).** *Imaginary Landscape, Scene from "Thanatopsis"* [photographic reproduction], 1850.

Oil on canvas. 39.5 x 61 in.  
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The friendship and mutual respect between Thomas Cole, William Cullen Bryant, and Durand revealed in the painting "Kindred Spirits" (see Wall Case 3) prompted many other paintings as well. Durand based several of his compositions on Bryant's poems, striving in the work shown here to interpret lines 40-45 from "Thanatopsis" which were included along with the painting when it was first displayed in 1850 at the National Academy of Design in New York City:

The venerable woods—rivers that move  
In majesty, and the complaining brooks  
That make the meadows green ...  
Are but the solemn decorations all  
Of the great tomb of man.

In the opinion of several critics, Durand captured in this work "the moral theme of 'Thanatopsis.'" Holly Joan Pinto of the Nassau County Museum of Fine Art concludes that the soul from this life alongside the undisturbed farmer ploughing his field, as well as the light-filled valley beyond, all create a "timeless sense of redemption."

On loan from the History of Art Department, Slide and Photograph Collection.

## WALL CASE 5

**Benton Spruance (1904-1967).** *Moby Dick, the Passion of Ahab.* Twenty-six lithographs by Benton Spruance; text by Lawrance Thompson. [Barre, Mass.: Barre Publishers, 1968]

The novel which many modern readers associate most closely with the romantic movement in America is Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1851), a powerful allegory of good and evil. Written during years of great literary productivity following nearly four years of adventures at sea and on islands in the South Seas, Melville produced in *Moby-Dick* a work which his contemporaries could not appreciate. For decades the work and its author were virtually ignored. The rediscovery which occurred in the 1920s led readers to recognize for the first time Melville's splendid literary qualities. Perhaps the postwar mood of disillusionment and despair finally permitted sympathetic entry into the worlds of Ishmael and Captain Ahab.

Certainly American lithographer and painter Benton Spruance moved within those worlds of suffering, anguish, horror, and monstrous brutalities when he created these interpretations of selected images and actions from the novel. After many years devoted to this project, Spruance met an unexpected and untimely death mid-way through the process of reproducing the prints for publication.

On display: Plate 4, "Strike through the Mask"  
Plate 11, "The Bachelor"  
Plate 20, "The Death of Fedallah"

## WALL CASE 6

**Washington Irving (1783-1859).** *Power of Attorney* [manuscript], August 15, 1838.

The legal documents shown here indicate that Washington Irving owned land in Jackson County, Michigan (he also owned land in Ionia and Ingham Coun-

ties) and that in 1838 he wished to sell. This document appoints David Godfrey (1800-1885) of Ann Arbor as Irving's "true and lawful Attorney," so as to arrange the sale of two parcels of land. In the bottom left corner are the signatures of the two witnesses, Gerard W. Morris and George Ireland, Jr. Ireland was Commissioner of Deeds in New York at this time.

**Washington Irving (1783-1859).** Satisfaction Piece [i.e., Satisfaction of Mortgage, manuscript], April 20, 1840.

This "Satisfaction Piece" certifies that Irving's attorney David Godfrey had arranged for the payment of a mortgage on behalf of Washington Irving and his friend Gouverneur Kemble (1786-1875), a businessman and congressman from New York and a member of the brilliant coterie of young men who associated with Irving during the period when *Salmagundi* and Knickerbocker's *History* were being composed (see Case 1). It is endorsed by George Ireland, Jr., and Adolph N. Gouverneur, both Commissioners of Deeds in New York City.



**Washington Irving (1783-1859)**

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